



RISK MANAGEMENT 2025/26

CUMULUS

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Summary

Wet in the west, near normal to drier northeast

While some thundershowers are expected over the interior through the weekend, the main event during the next few days will be a band of showers and thundershowers from Sunday over the western parts, developing ahead of an upper-air trough in the west and with moisture contributed by a tropical low over northern Namibia. Widespread showers and thundershowers are expected over the western to southern parts on Sunday and Monday, moving slowly eastwards. The band may also influence the central interior, with current forecasts indicating showers and thundershowers moving into the western parts of the summer-grain production region early next week, before the system weakens and moves out to the south-east.

While most of the western and possibly the central interior will receive rain, with totals of between 20 mm and 50 mm over large areas, lighter falls are indicated over the north-eastern parts, including the northern to eastern parts of the summer-grain production region, as the system is expected to weaken while moving east during the first half of next week. The north-eastern parts of the country are expected to remain warm to hot and mostly dry until the middle of next week.

Looking further ahead, forecast models indicate a continuation of near-normal to above-normal rainfall over the central to western parts, while the north-eastern areas are expected to remain relatively dry. Current large-scale patterns along the equator are not conducive to widespread above-normal rainfall over the northern to eastern parts. While this pattern is likely to persist for the next week or two, conditions should gradually become more favourable for rainfall over the north-eastern parts during March.

Weak La Niña conditions at present is expected to weaken further. Recent atmospheric and oceanic indicators have generally trended away from La Niña conditions. Seasonal forecast models at this stage do not give a clear indication of expected conditions during autumn, and the forecasts have trended slightly drier compared to earlier expectations.



The following is a summary of weather conditions during the next few days (until middle next week):

- Temperatures will be near normal over most of the interior.
- It will be hot over the western to southern parts at times until Sunday.
- It will be hot on most days over the Limpopo River Valley, Lowveld and northern to eastern parts of KZN.
- The western to southern parts of the country are expected to receive above-normal rainfall during the period, while near-normal rainfall may occur over the central parts, including the western parts of the summer-rainfall region.
- Cumulative rainfall until Tuesday 24th may exceed 50 mm over large parts of the Northern Cape, central to eastern parts of the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape as well as parts of the western to southern Free State, according to current forecasts. Given the multi-day lead time, the exact area receiving significant rain may still shift somewhat east or west.
- The north-eastern parts of the country, including the northern to central and eastern parts of the summer-grain production region, are expected to receive below-normal rain for this time of the year, with totals expected to remain below 10 mm over most of the area.
- Isolated to scattered thundershowers will occur over the central to northern and eastern parts initially and into the weekend.
- By Sunday, a band of scattered to widespread showers and thundershowers will develop over the western interior, also influencing the winter rainfall region. The band will slowly progress eastwards to reach the central parts by the middle of next week, while weakening, with falls becoming lower according to current forecasts.
- Rain will clear from the west, and it should be dry over the western to central parts by the middle of next week.
- **The summer-grain production region** should receive normal to above-normal rainfall in the southwest, but below-normal rainfall for this time of year over most of the rest of the region. Isolated to scattered thundershowers are expected over the region on most days. Temperatures will be near normal. It will become cloudy and cooler in the southwest, with scattered to widespread showers and thundershowers, according to current forecasts from Sunday onwards, possibly spreading into the central parts of the region and finally the north-eastern parts, while clearing in the west by the middle of the week.
- **The winter rainfall region** will become hot during the weekend, but showers or thundershowers may occur over the area from Sunday into early next week, when temperatures will moderate. Depending on the position of the low early next week, there is a chance that some areas may receive significant showers or thundershowers. It will clear by Tuesday, while a cold front may bring cooler conditions with light showers, especially over the southern to western parts, by Wednesday.



Overview of expected conditions over the main agricultural production areas

An upper-air low is expected to move into the south-western parts of the country by Sunday and into early next week, and, together with moisture from a tropical low over northern Namibia, will result in extensive rainfall over the western parts from the weekend into early next week. The system is expected to move eastwards during next week but is forecast to weaken according to current outlooks, resulting in less widespread rain over the northern to eastern parts.

Maize production region:

- Isolated to scattered thundershowers are possible over much of the region on most days, but cumulative totals are expected to be lower over the northern to eastern areas where most places should receive less than 15 mm until Wednesday next week, according to current forecasts.
- Maximum temperatures over the eastern grain-production areas will range between 24°C and 33°C. Minimum temperatures will range between 11°C and 15°C.
- Maximum temperatures over the western grain-production areas will range between 22°C and 34°C, with the highest temperatures during the weekend while being lowest by the middle of next week. Minimum temperatures will be in the order of 13°C to 19°C.
- **Friday (20th):** Partly cloudy and warm with isolated thundershowers, but scattered over the higher-lying far-eastern parts.
- **Saturday (21st):** Partly cloudy and warm with scattered thundershowers, but isolated in the southwest.
- **Sunday (22nd):** Partly cloudy and warm with isolated thundershowers. It will become cloudy over the south-western parts, with scattered showers or thundershowers.
- **Monday (23rd):** Partly cloudy and warm with isolated thundershowers. It will be cloudy in the southwest where scattered showers or thundershowers are possible. Moderate to fresh north-westerly winds are expected over the western parts.
- **Tuesday to Thursday (24th – 26th):** Current forecasts indicate that the cloud band over the western parts of the country, which is also expected to result in some showers or thundershowers over the south-western areas of the region from Sunday, could possibly move further east while the upper-air system weakens. This can lead to cloudy, cooler conditions moving in from the west during the Tuesday-Wednesday period while the cloud band is expected to become less pronounced. As the system moves east and weakens, rainfall totals over the central to northern and eastern parts of the region are expected to be lower, remaining mostly below 15 mm, according to current forecasts. The windy conditions over the central to western parts may continue at times until Tuesday.



Cape Wine Lands and Rûens:

It will be hot over the northern to western parts and warm to mild along the Garden Route through the weekend, with little to no rain. It will become partly cloudy to cloudy over the region, with scattered thundershowers from Sunday until Tuesday. On Monday and Tuesday, rainfall may become widespread over the interior, especially from the Boland eastwards, when significant totals and severe weather may occur in places. It should clear by Tuesday, when it will be mild to warm over the region, while a cold front and an onshore flow over the southern to south-western parts may result in light showers along the Garden Route and in the south-west.

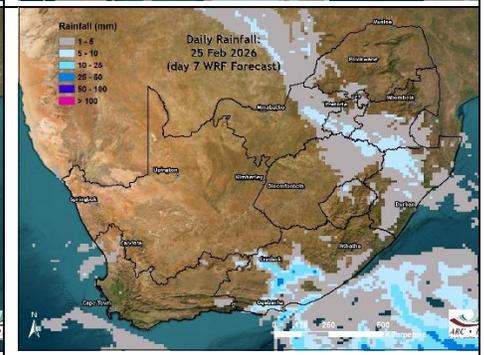
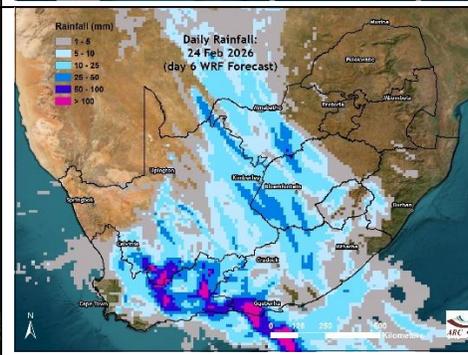
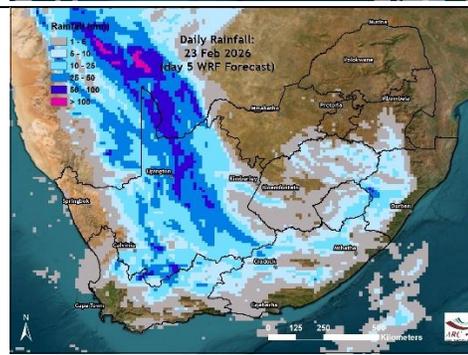
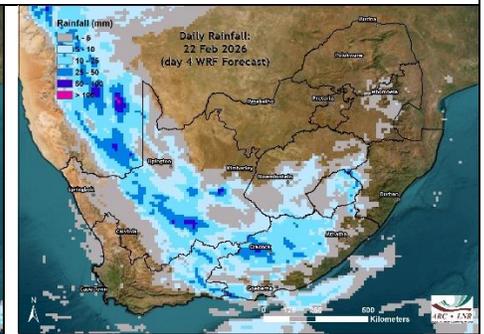
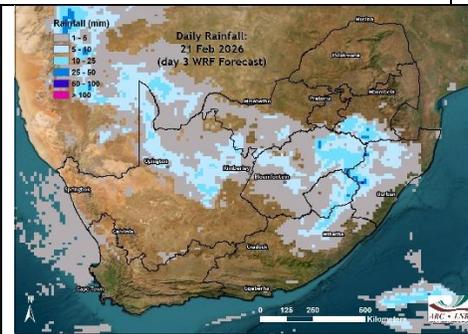
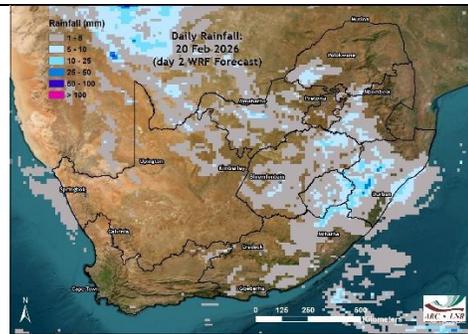
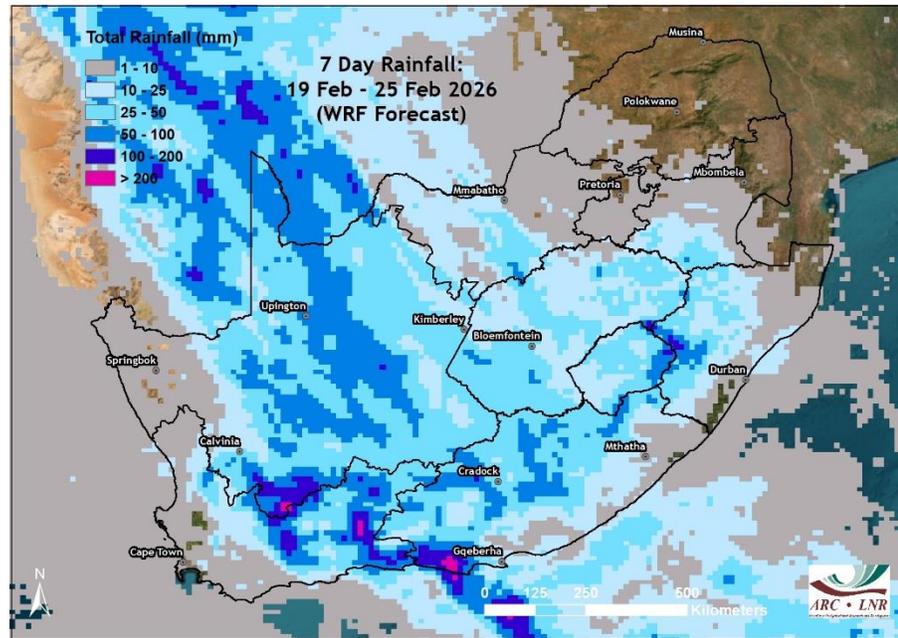


Daily summary of expected conditions (20 - 25 Feb)

(GFS forecast downscaled using WRF)

Rainfall

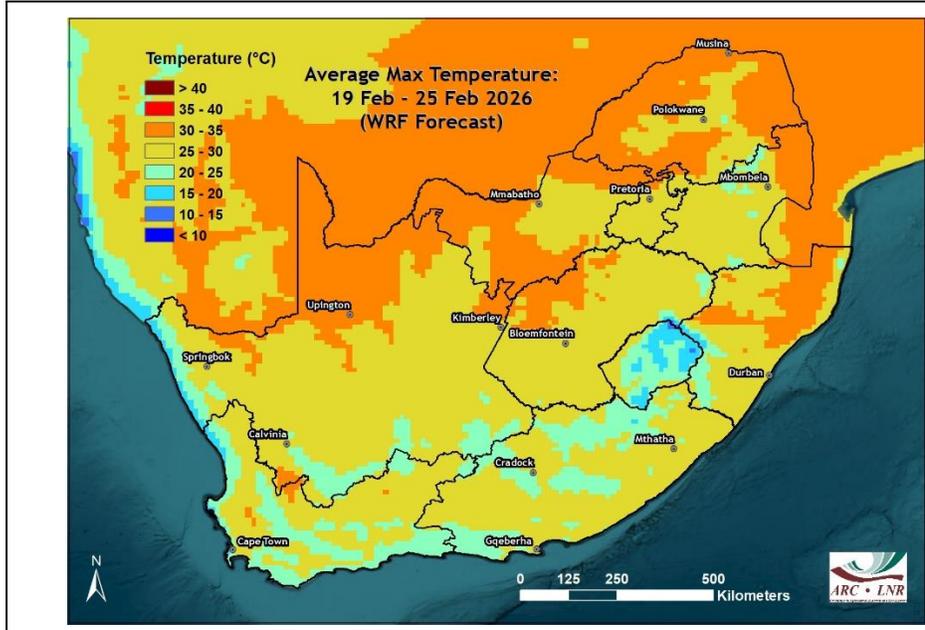
- The central to western and southern parts should receive rain during the next few days until the 25th while little to no rain is expected in the northeast according to current forecasts.
- Significant totals over the multi-day period are possible over parts of the Northern and Western Cape Provinces, and to a lesser extent further east over the Eastern Cape.



- Isolated to scattered thundershowers will occur initially and into the weekend over the central to eastern parts while the northeast is expected to remain mostly dry.

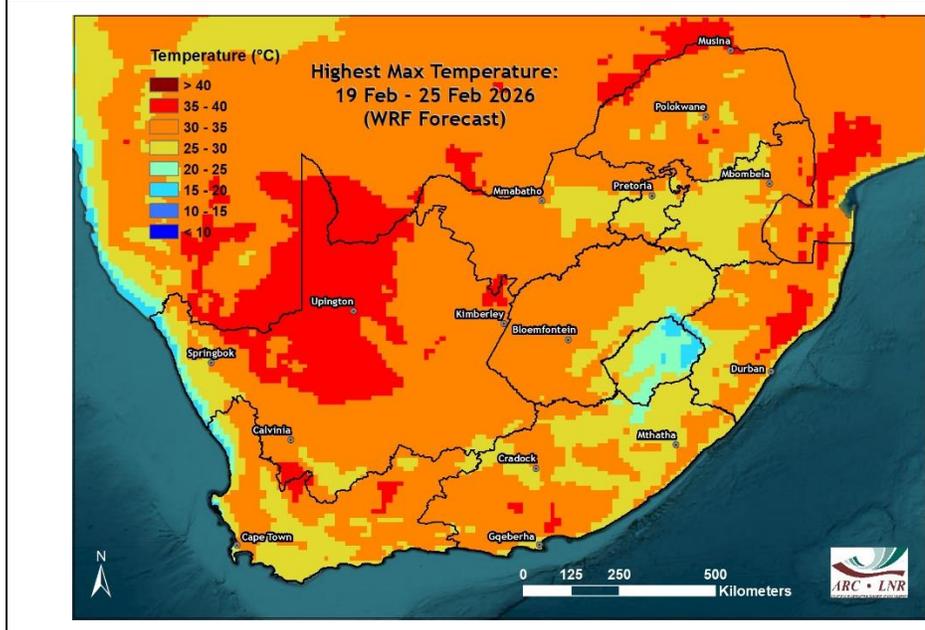


- From Sunday onwards, a band of showers and thundershowers will develop in the west and move eastwards slowly. The band of showers and thundershowers should weaken by Tuesday while moving eastwards over the central parts.
- It should clear from the west on Tuesday / Wednesday.



Average maximum temperatures

- Average maximum temperatures will range between 25 and 30°C over the interior.
- Average maximum temperatures will exceed 30°C over the lower-lying northern to eastern parts.



Highest maximum temperatures

- **Highest temperatures, exceeding 35°C, are expected:**
- Karoo
- Central to northern parts of the Northern Cape
- Limpopo River Valley, Lowveld and north-eastern to eastern KZN.

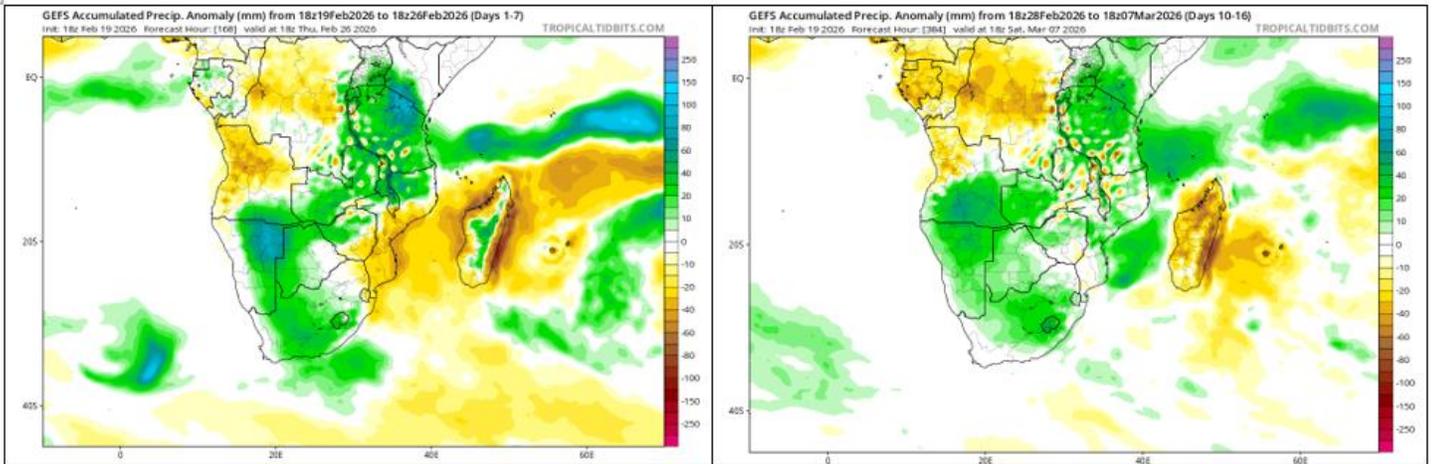
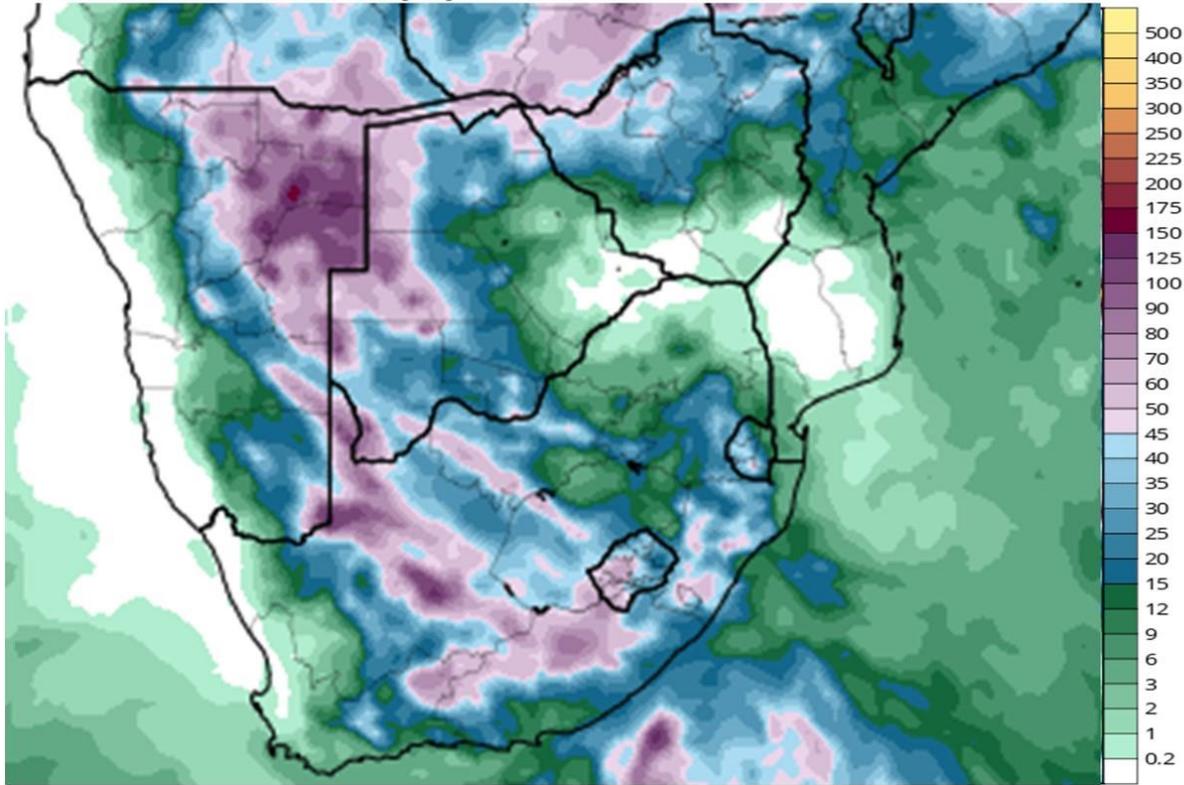


Medium term rainfall summary

GFS Total Accumulated Precipitation (mm) from 00z20Feb2026 to 18z26Feb2026

Init: 00z Feb 20 2026 Forecast Hour: [162] valid at 18z Thu, Feb 26 2026

TROPICALTIDBITS.COM



Cumulative rainfall totals through the middle of next week (top) are expected to range between 30 and 60 mm over the western to central interior while below 15 mm over most of the northeastern parts. According to the GFS ensemble, the next few days will be relatively over the western to central parts (bottom left). The pattern remains similar according to the ensemble forecast into early March (bottom right).

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Possible extreme conditions - relevant to agriculture

The South African Weather Service issues warnings for any severe weather that may develop, based on much more information (and in near-real time) than the output of only 2 weather models (GFS and the ECMWF model) considered here in the beginning of a week-long period (20 - 26 February). It is therefore advised to keep track of warnings that may be issued by the SAWS (www.weathersa.co.za) as the week progresses.

According to current model projections (GFS / ECMWF models) of weather conditions during the coming week, the following may negatively affect agricultural activities and production:

It will be hot, with maximum temperatures exceeding 35°C:

- Swartland: **Friday and Saturday (20th - 21st).**
- Karoo (most of the interior of the Western Cape, western half of the Eastern Cape), southern half of the Eastern Cape: **Friday to Sunday (20th – 22nd).**
- Interior of the Northern Cape: **Friday to Saturday (20th – 21st).**
- Eastern to northern parts of KZN: **Friday to Saturday (20th – 21st) and Tuesday to Wednesday (24th – 25th).**
- Limpopo River Valley and Lowveld: **Friday to Saturday (20th – 21st) and Tuesday to Wednesday (24th – 25th).**

Cloudy and wet conditions may contribute to the development and spread of fungal diseases:

- Western to southern parts of the summer-grain production region: **Sunday to Tuesday (22nd – 24th).**

Thundershowers may have an enhanced tendency to become severe:

- Southern Mpumalanga, interior of KZN, eastern parts of the Eastern Cape: **Friday and Saturday (20th – 21st).**
- Northern Cape interior, Eastern Cape interior and eastern half of the Western Cape interior: **Sunday (22nd).**
- Mountainous areas of the Western Cape: **Monday (23rd).**

Hot, dry, and at times windy conditions may be conducive to the development and spread of wildfires:

- South-western parts of the country, including the winter rainfall region: **Friday to Sunday (20th – 22nd).**
- Interior of the Northern Cape: **Friday to Sunday (13th – 15th).**

Strong to gale-force south-easterly winds are possible:

- South-western parts of the Western Cape: **Friday to Saturday (20th – 21st).**

Significant daily rainfall totals (>50 mm per 24-hour period) may occur:

- North-eastern half of the Northern Cape, northern parts of the Eastern Cape: **Monday (23rd).**
- Central to eastern interior of the Western Cape, southern parts of the Northern Cape: **Tuesday (24th).**

Cool, wet, and windy conditions may pose a threat to small stock:

- Karoo, Klein Karoo, rest of the interiors of the Western Cape and Eastern Cape: **Monday into Tuesday (23rd – 24th).**



Seasonal forecast

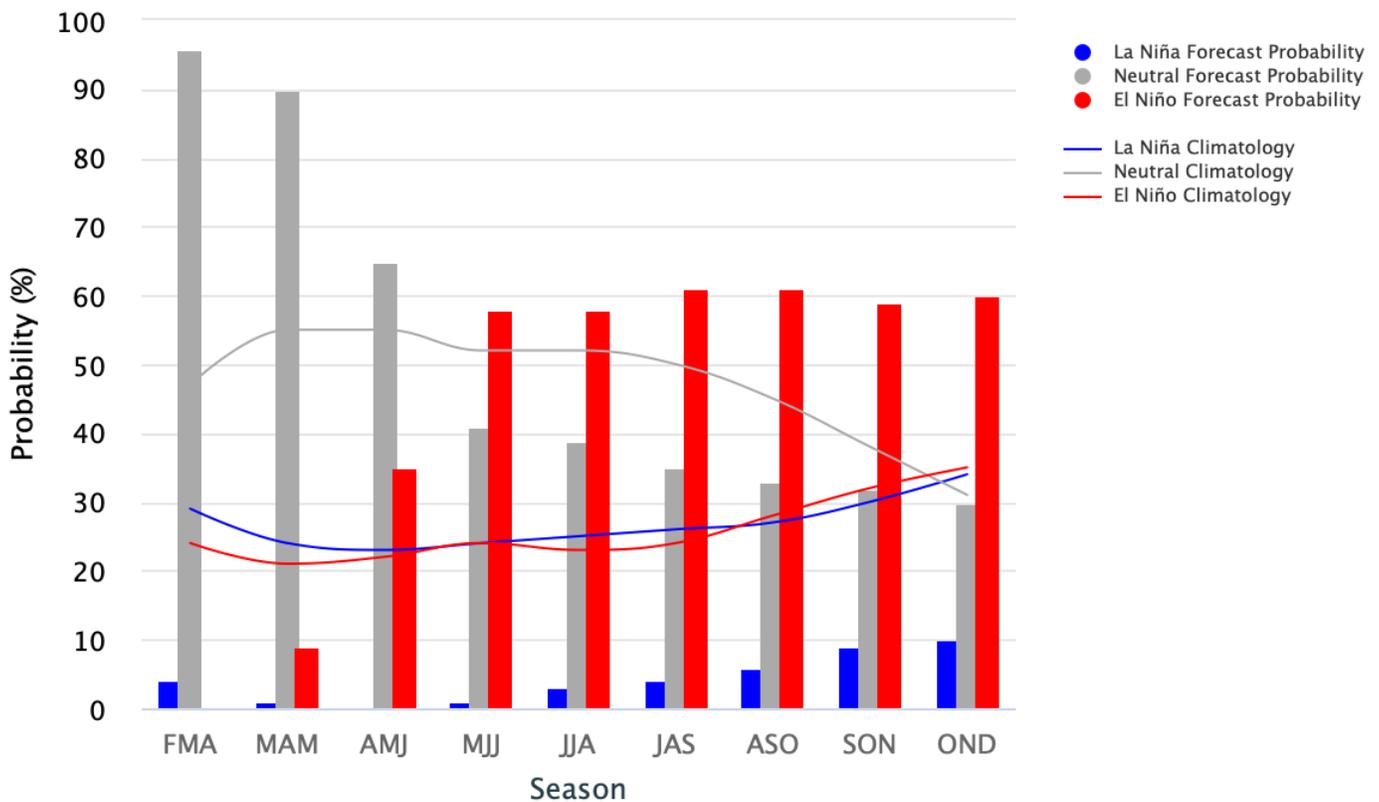
Current ENSO conditions:

Weak La Niña conditions are still expected to come to an end during late summer, and recent Sea Surface Temperatures have increased over the eastern parts of the Equatorial Pacific, indicating an end to the event. The weak signal from the Pacific results in a lack of direction by seasonal forecasts for South Africa into Autumn.

The graph below shows the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) ENSO forecast, with La Niña conditions expected to reach a peak in mid-summer.

Mid-February 2026 IRI Model-Based Probabilistic ENSO Forecasts

ENSO state based on NINO3.4 SST Anomaly Neutral ENSO: -0.5 °C to 0.5 °C



International Research Institute for Climate and Society- <http://iri.columbia.edu/>

|



In their most recent update (issued 19 February), the IRI states that " By mid-February 2026, weak La Niña conditions had begun to decline slightly, as reflected in both atmospheric and oceanic variables. In January 2026, the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) was +9.9, while the equatorial SOI was +0.5, indicating a weakening of the pressure gradient between the two regions. However, the most recent 30-day SOI value (ending 17 February 2026) remains within La Niña territory. Low-level winds (850 hPa) were near average across the east-central and eastern Pacific. Enhanced convection and increased rainfall were observed over parts of Indonesia, indicated by below-average outgoing longwave radiation (OLR), while suppressed convection and reduced precipitation prevailed around the Date Line, associated with above-average OLR, both typical of La Niña. However, above-average subsurface temperatures have strengthened across the Pacific and expanded farther eastward, with below-average subsurface temperatures confined to a small area in the far eastern Pacific. Although the warmer subsurface waters now dominate much of the Pacific, the warming itself remains relatively weak. Nevertheless, due to this subsurface warming and its eastward extent, the Niño 1+2 index has gradually increased over the past four weeks and currently stands at +0.7 for the week centered on 11 February 2026.

Taken together, these conditions indicate a gradual weakening of La Niña in the central-eastern equatorial Pacific, with signs of possible El Niño development in the subsurface.."

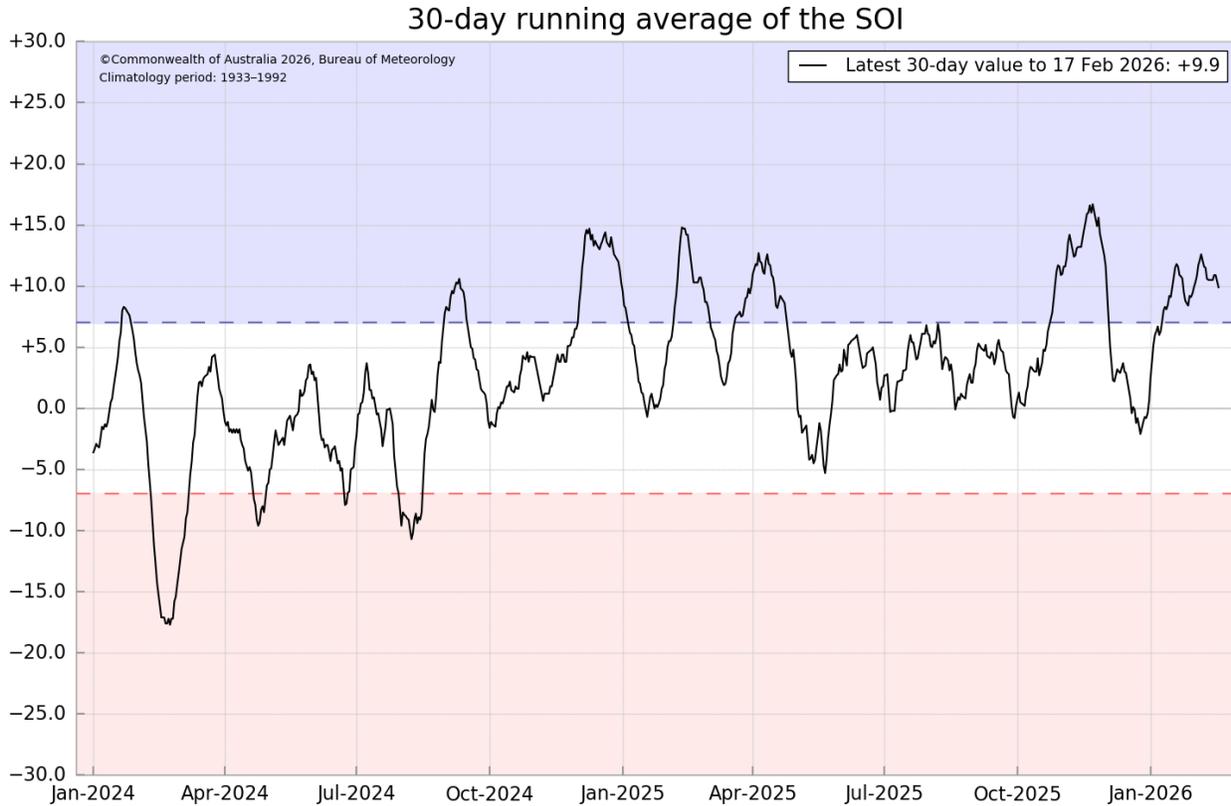
In their most recent update (17 February), the **Australian Bureau of Meteorology** states that the La Niña event may come to an end by late summer:

- The 2025–26 La Niña continues to weaken. Sea surface temperatures in the central tropical Pacific have been fluctuating around the La Niña threshold ($-0.80\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$) since late January, with the latest relative Niño3.4 index value for the week ending 15 February 2026 staying largely steady at $-0.77\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. Recent warming in the sub-surface suggests further decline of the event is likely in the coming weeks.
- Atmospheric indicators, such as trade winds, pressure and cloud patterns in the tropical Pacific are consistent with borderline La Niña conditions. Cloudiness near the Date Line has been weakly below average for the past fortnight. Trade winds in the central equatorial Pacific have been slightly enhanced in the past fortnight, despite a burst of strong westerly winds in the western part of the basin in late January.
- As of 15 February 2026, the 30-day Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) is +10.9, which is above the La Niña threshold of +7. The 60-day and 90-day SOI index values are +10.4 and +7.6 respectively. Transient tropical systems can affect the short-term SOI during the summer months and are not necessarily a reflection of the state of the climate system.
- These recent changes in the tropical Pacific are consistent with model forecasts, which for some months have indicated a general easing of La Niña during the latter part of the 2025–26 summer. All models, including the Bureau's indicate a return to neutral ENSO conditions later this month or in early autumn. Continued warming in the tropical Pacific is forecast with a neutral ENSO state favoured through to at least late autumn. Some models suggest the possibility of El Niño development from June. However, it should be noted that this is a very long lead time for such a prediction, and forecasts beyond autumn are highly uncertain, as reflected in the large spread across models and within ensemble members.."..... <http://www.bom.gov.au>



The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) is in neutral territory. Neutral values in the SAM are not associated with specific anomalies in rainfall over the eastern parts of southern Africa (unlike negative or positive values of the index).

The 30-day Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) have decreased to +10.5 and represents atmospheric pressure patterns in the Australia – Pacific region indicative of La Niña conditions. Such atmospheric conditions are positively correlated with above-normal rainfall over the summer rainfall region of South Africa.

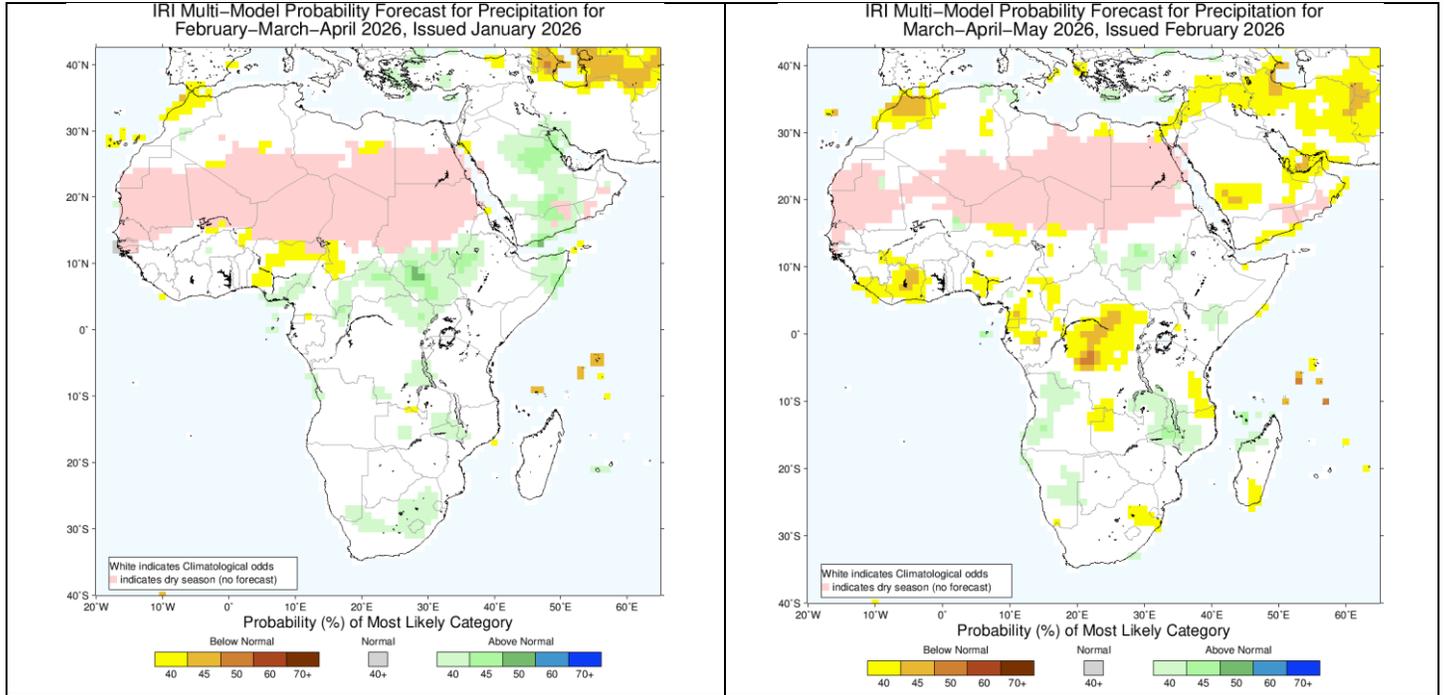


Australian Bureau of Meteorology - <http://www.bom.gov.au>

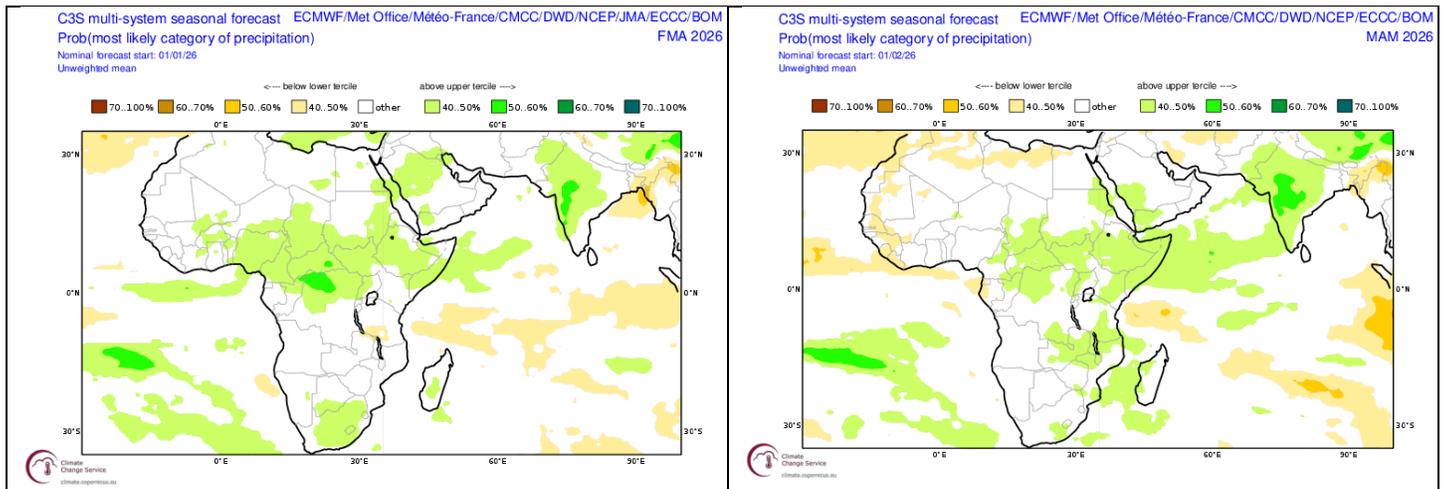


Seasonal forecasts issued by various international institutions

Seasonal forecasts (updated in January and February 2026) continue to indicate a weak rainfall signal over southern Africa, given the weak La Niña event currently present, but lean towards normal to above-normal rainfall over the summer-rainfall region during late summer and near normal to below normal during autumn.



Probabilistic forecasts by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) for rainfall for late summer (February to April 2026, left – Forecast issued in 2026-01) and autumn (March to May 2026, right – Forecast issued in 2026-02).



Probabilistic multi-model forecasts by the multi-system COPERNICUS Programme for late summer (February to April 2026, left – Forecast issued in 2026-01) and autumn (March to May 2026, right – Forecast issued in 2026-02).



CUMULUS seasonal outlook

This outlook is based on the typical observed rainfall patterns over the north-eastern half of the country (including most of the summer grain-production region), which are associated with the cyclic variability of the global climate system. Summers like 2025/26 usually experience near-normal rainfall totals over the north-eastern parts of the country. There is a tendency for above-normal rainfall during January, while relatively dry conditions are usually observed during February and early March.

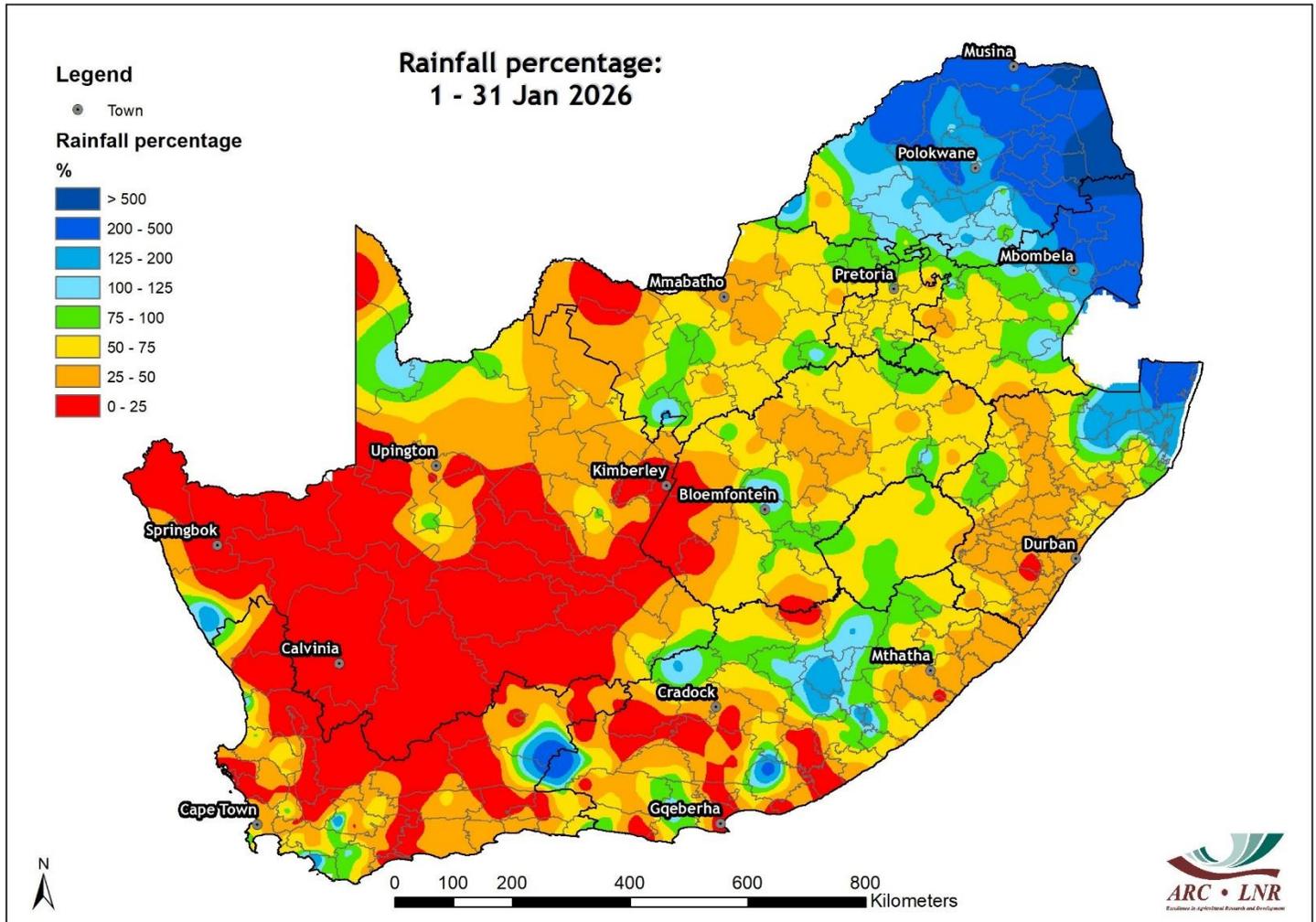
Typical patterns during similar summers, over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region, are:

- **October:** Near-normal to above-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **November:** Near-normal to below-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **December:** Somewhat wetter earlier in the month but usually trending drier into early January over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **January:** Relatively dry early in the month, but above-normal rainfall is possible during the second half over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **February-early March:** Near-normal to below-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region
- **Mid- to late March:** Above-normal rainfall over the north-eastern half of the summer rainfall region



Observed conditions

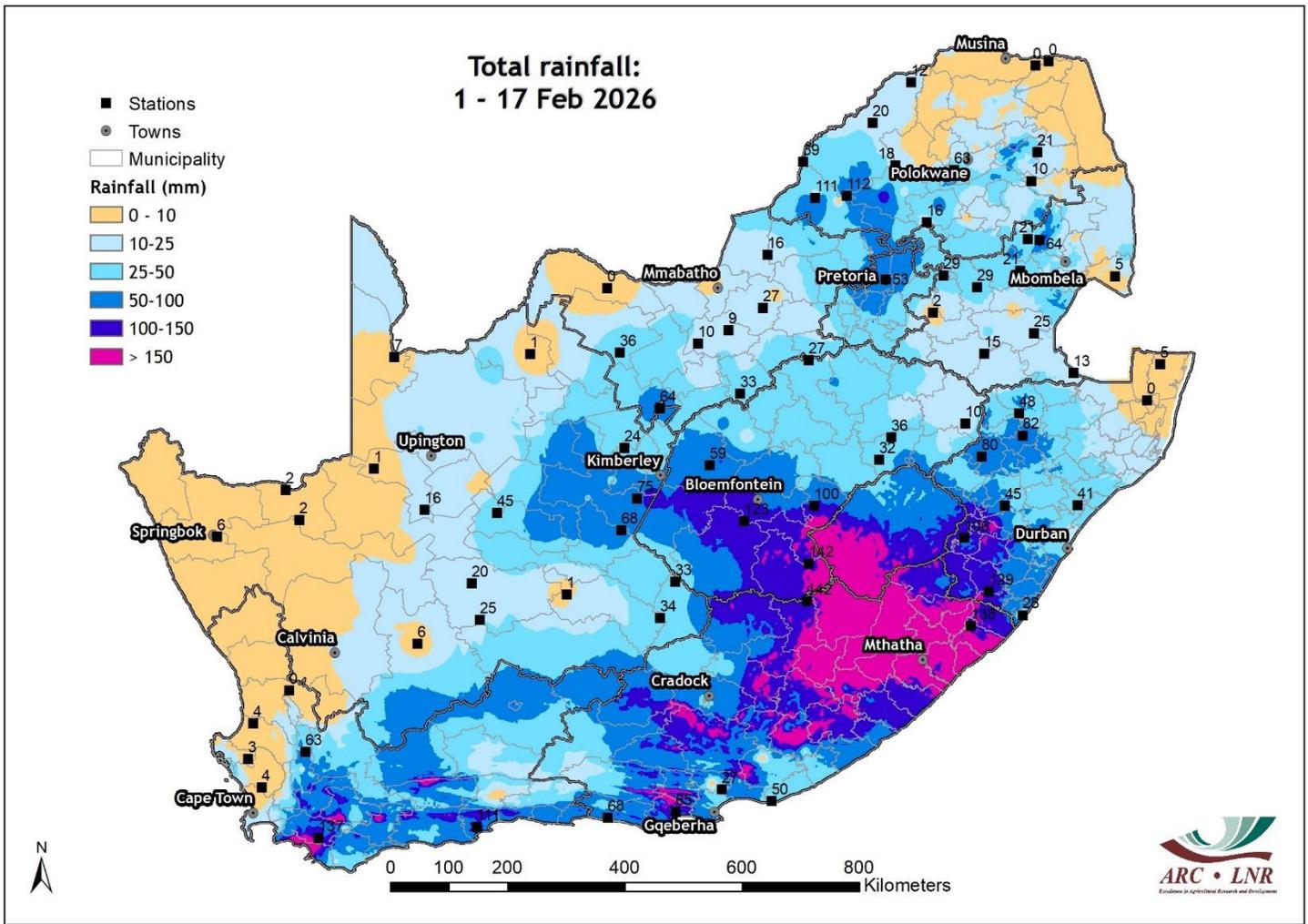
Rainfall (% of long-term average): January 2026



Above-average rainfall occurred over the north-eastern parts during January while most of the rest of the country received below-average rainfall.



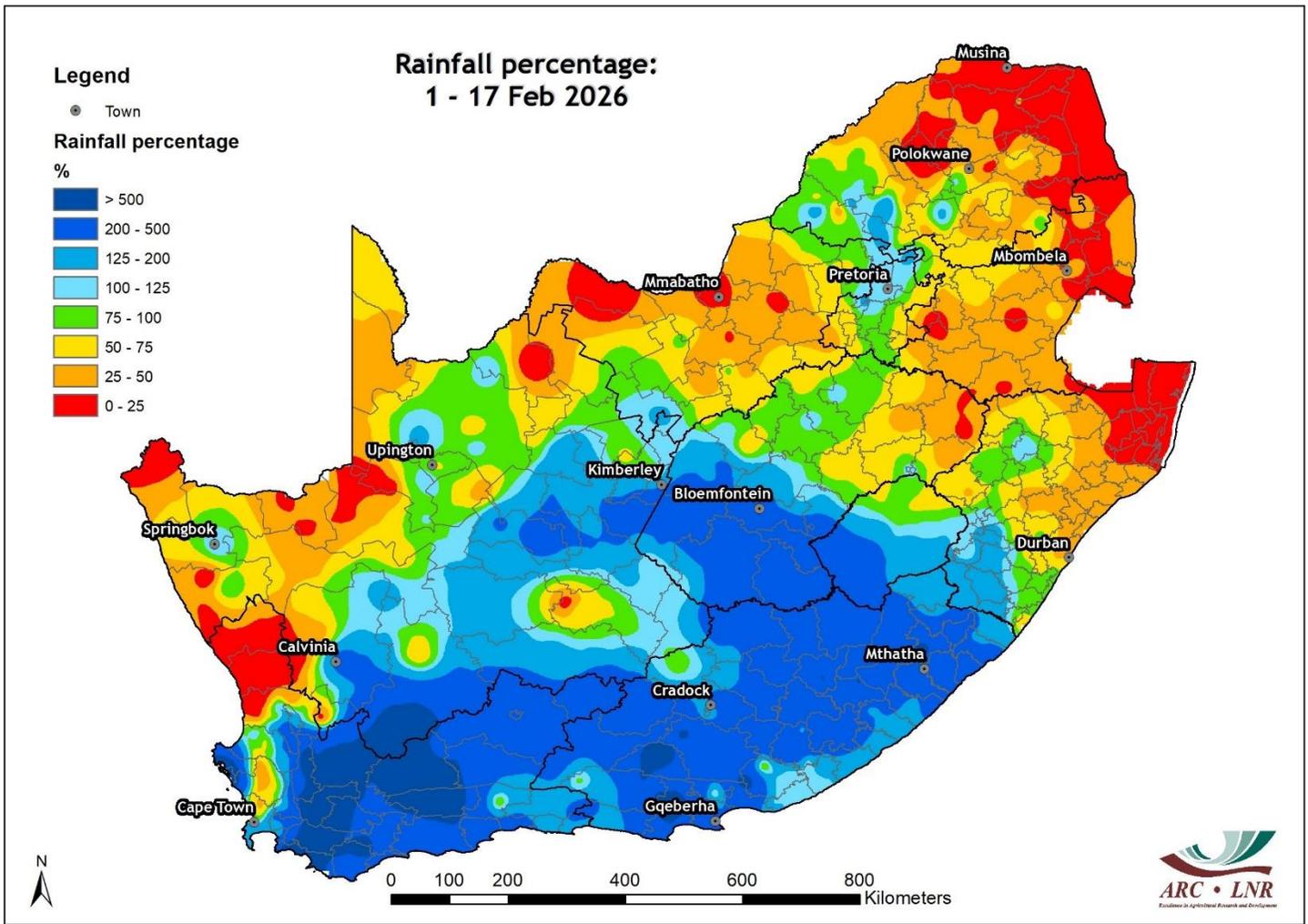
Rainfall (mm): 1 – 17 February 2026



Large parts of the summer-grain production region received between 10 and 50 mm during the first 17 days of February. Large parts of the southern half of the country received more than 50 mm, with more than 100 mm accumulated over the southern Free State and most of the eastern parts of the Eastern Cape.



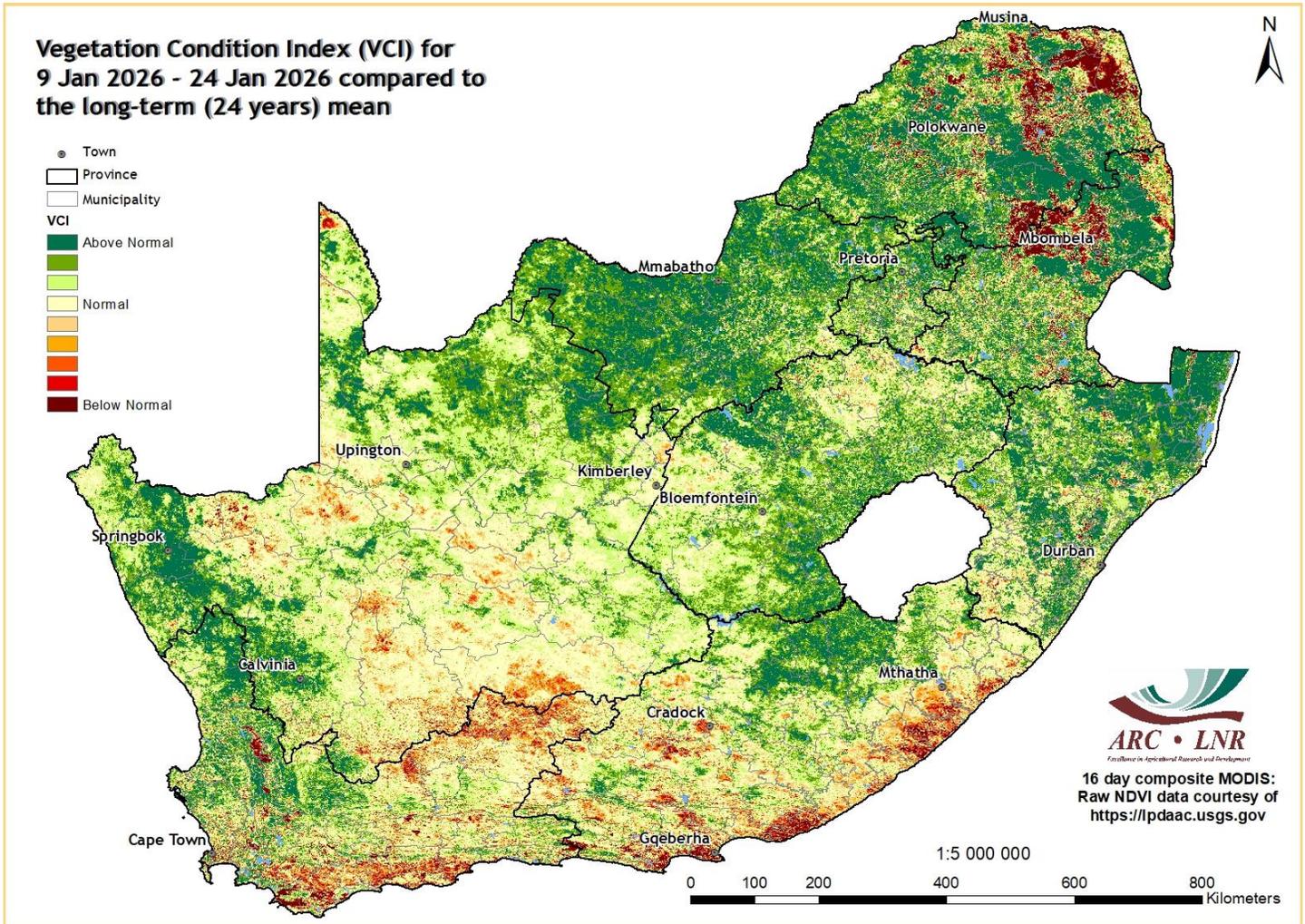
Rainfall (% of long-term average): 1 – 17 February



Above-average rainfall occurred over the southern parts during the first half of February, including the southern half of the winter rainfall region, while most of the rest of the country received below-average rainfall.



Vegetation Condition Index: January 2026



Vegetation activity in January was above normal over most areas, following above-normal rainfall until April and again from August–December over large parts of the interior. Over the winter rainfall region, especially in the eastern parts and further east along the Garden Route, significantly below-normal rainfall has a negative impact on vegetation activity. Negative anomalies over the escarpment of Mpumalanga and eastern Limpopo are artifacts caused by abundant cloud cover interfering with data quality.



Sources of information

Seasonal forecasts: Published by the COPERNICUS Programme (<https://climate.copernicus.eu/seasonal-forecasts>)

Rainfall, temperature and wind maps over South Africa for the past week:

Agricultural Research Council - Institute for Soil, Climate and Water (ISCW) – Climate Data Bank. Data recorded by the automatic weather station network of the ARC-ISCW.

Vegetation condition maps: Copernicus Global Land service, distributed by VITO.

Information related to: ENSO, IOD and SOI:

Australian Bureau of Meteorology - <http://www.bom.gov.au>

Climate Prediction Center - <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>

International Research Institute for Climate and Society- <http://iri.columbia.edu/>

Information related to the SAM:

The Annular Mode Website - <http://www.atmos.colostate.edu/ao/index.html>

SST map:

NOAA Climate Prediction Center - <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>

Daily conditions over South Africa:

WRF model downscaling of GFS forecasts.

Fires:

MODIS data, distributed by the Land Processes Distributed Active Data Center (LP DAAC), located at the US Geological Survey's EROS Data Center

Soil moisture:

<https://nasagrace.unl.edu/>

Precipitation and temperature outlooks for the coming week:

<https://www.tropicaltidbits.com/>

